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HR/CDA/AD - KATHRYN CHELSEN, PLEASE PASS TO BARRY W. RICE

E.O. 12958: N/A

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SUBJECT: WELCOME TO ISRAEL

1. The Embassy Community is very happy to welcome you to Tel Aviv. This is one of three information cables that will be sent to you from post. The three cables are (1) Welcome to Israel, (2) TMTHREE - Welcome to Post, and (3) Shipping Instructions. The following information should help make your transition to Israel smoother and answer some of the questions you may have.

2. About the post

Embassy Tel Aviv is one of the most exciting, high profile, Embassies in the world. It hosts frequent visits by the President, Secretary of State, other Cabinet Members, Congressional Delegations, Flag Officers, and Naval Ship Visits. The ongoing peace process provides numerous opportunities to witness history in the making.

The address of the Embassy is 71 Hayarkon Street, Tel Aviv 63903, Israel. The Embassy Phone number is 972 (3) 519-7575. Most mission employees work in the Chancery, but employees of USAID and Public Diplomacy work in separate facilities near the Embassy. The Embassy warehouse and most of the GSO section, along with the Defense Contract Management Agency (DCMA), United States Army Corps of Engineers (USACE) and The Open Source Center (formerly the Foreign Broadcast Information Service) are located in Herzliya Pituach. These offices are approximately 10 miles north of Tel Aviv. The Embassy hours are 8:00 a.m. - 4:30 p.m., Monday to Friday, except for DCMA, which operates on the regular Israeli workweek of Sunday to Thursday.

3. Visas

Israel requires visas for holders of diplomatic and official passports. All personnel posted to Tel Aviv must obtain Israeli visas from the nearest Israeli Embassy or Consulate prior to arrival in Israel.

4. In-processing at post

Human Resources Assistant Ms. Lyndall Leitman (LEITMANLL@STATE.GOV) will arrange with your office sponsor to check you and your family in upon your arrival. This normally happens the first workday after your arrival. All employees are requested to bring four (4) passport-size photos with, for yourself and your dependents over the age of 16.

5. Pre-Arrival Information & Sponsorship

Post's pre-arrival kit, includes useful information on Embassy services, the city of Tel Aviv and Israel in general. You can request a copy of the most recent embassy newsletter, "The Tel Aviv Star", by providing the CLO with your preferred email address at CLOtelaviv@state.gov. In addition, the video "Welcome to Tel Aviv", is available at the Overseas Briefing Center and on the post intranet site. It will give you a visual tour of the mission, housing, schools, city and country. You may also access the CLO website at www.tlvstar.com to get additional information about life at post. This is a password protected site so please contact the CLO for the user name and password.

When Post receives information of your pending arrival, your agency/section head will assign an office sponsor, who is responsible for many of the administrative details prior to your arrival.

The CLO will make every effort to assign a community sponsor for you once your housing assignment is made. The community sponsor serves in a voluntary capacity and will introduce you to the neighborhood and general surroundings following your arrival. A "good neighbor alert" is also initiated by informing all of your closest neighbors of your arrival and location.

Prior to your arrival at post, please consider the CLO office as your primary point of contact for any questions related to day-to-day living in Israel.

16. Medical

The Embassy maintains a Health Unit at the Embassy, with a branch office open usually once a week in Herzliya Pituach, the northern suburb where many families live. A Foreign Service Health Practitioner (FSHP), a locally hired RN and Administrative Assistant staff the units, treating acute illnesses, chronic medical problems and providing immunizations and preventive health.

Israel has excellent medical facilities, and standards are generally very high, but the health care system is often confusing to newcomers. The Health Unit is there to provide guidance in navigating a system where language and local norms may seem strange.

Most prescription medications are available locally, but some common medications are unavailable. The FSHP can write prescriptions for medications from U.S. pharmacies and insurance plans. Over-the-counter medications are available in Israel. Some areas of Israel do not have adequate fluoride in the water, and the health unit staff can provide you with information and fluoride supplements as needed for your children. The tap water in major cities in Israel is safe to drink, though may have a bad taste due to high mineral content.

If you work for a Foreign Service Agency you are required to obtain your updated Medical Clearance from MED Washington prior to arriving at Post. If you have special needs or concerns please contact the health unit (972-3-519-7323) or the Office of Medical Services in Washington, prior to arrival.

17. Shipping

Complete information on shipping your personal effects and POV can be found in the shipping instruction cable (septel). All information regarding vehicles can be found in paragraphs eight, nine, and ten of the shipping instructions cable. If you did not receive it, please notify us as soon as possible, as the shipping instructions are vital to ensure a smooth shipment of your HHE, UAB and POV. Be sure to check with post to ensure your vehicle conforms to Israeli import regulations, which differ from American vehicle specifications. Comprehensive shipping information can be found on Embassy Tel Aviv's intranet web site under the GSO Shipping heading.

One reminder: Please remember to hand carry your packing lists for both HHE and UAB to Tel Aviv as well as your POV registration/title so we can institute customs clearance without delay. These can also be faxed to GSO at 972 (9) 955-8656.

Special Note: Food & Drink Contents: Please contact GSO Shipping before sending such items in your shipments.

18. Pets

Information on shipping your pet can be found in paragraph 12 of the shipping instruction cable. More detailed information can also be found on Tel Aviv's Intranet site at <http://10.193.128.11>. Go to the GSO/Shipping section for information. Pet food and kitty litter are readily available at the employee association co-op and on the local economy. There are several qualified veterinarians in Israel.

19. Firearms

Government of Israel (GOI) prohibits the importation of and/or possession of firearms for other than official purposes. Personal weapons cannot be shipped to post. For information on importing official use weapons or for further information please contact the RSO office.

¶10. Mail

Tel Aviv is an APO post. Please contact your office sponsor for your correct office mailbox number prior to making arrangements to forward mail items to post. Please check in with the APO mailroom staff immediately upon arrival to ensure your mail has been arriving and is addressed correctly. The correct address format for personal and official mail is:

Personal: (Your Name)
PSC 98, Box (see comment above)
APO AE 09830

Official: (Your Section)
Attn: (Name of official representing that section)
Unit 7228, Box (see comments above)
APO AE 09830

NOTE: Never include "Tel Aviv" or "Israel" in your personal or official addresses. Indicating either of the above could significantly delay mail transit times.

¶11. International courier

Sending any items other than documents through an international courier service is not recommended. From Post's experience, sending goods through such services has proven costly to the individual due to airport storage and paperwork fees. Use of APO is both faster and less expensive.

¶12. Travel plans

Please advise your agency/section representative ASAP of your firm travel plans including flight number, date and time of arrival. Post will arrange for your sponsor to meet and greet you at the airport and escort you to your home.

¶13. Embassy Recreation Center

The Recreation Center is located in Kfar Shmaryahu, which is approximately 10 miles north of Tel Aviv near Embassy housing. The indoor recreation center includes a small gym, media room, game and meeting rooms. The outdoor recreation center includes a tennis court, adult and children pools, and a snack bar for personal use. Games and social events scheduled there, primarily during spring, summer, and fall by the CLO.

¶14. School

Most Mission children attend the Walworth Barbour American International School (AIS) in Israel. Requests for enrollment applications and specific questions about the program should be directed to the school at:

P.O. Box 484
64 Hashomron Street
Even Yehuda
40500, Israel
Tel: 972 (9) 890-1000 or 972 (9) 890-1001
Email: aisrael@wbais.org
Or
Elementary program (fifth grade): pisraels@wbais.org

In addition to contacting the school, please contact the CLO by email or fax with the names, birth dates and grades your child/children will be entering upon arrival as soon as your assignment is confirmed. Since a large number of diplomatic children in Israel attend AIS, CLO will ensure that the school is notified of your child/children's arrival. CLOTELAVIV@STATE.GOV
Fax: 972 (3) 510-4415

Note that enrollment at AIS is contingent upon the student's ability to meet the academic standards set forth by AIS.

If you have a child with special needs, please understand that the school has limited capabilities for handling either mentally or physically challenged children. If AIS is unable to accommodate a child, there are few, if any, outside educational options available in English. It is in your best interest to contact the school in advance and have a thorough diagnostic work-up prior to arrival, and to hand carry all records with you.

Upon arrival all students are required to make an appointment with the school for placement testing.

Preschool

AIS offers a preschool in Kfar Shmaryahu as well, with half-day classes for children, ages 2-5, an After School Care Program, and a Mommy, Daddy, and Me Program for ages 1-2.

AIS offers three classes with an enrollment of 10-16 students per class; the Ducklings, ages 2-3 (maximum class size: 10), the Teddy Bears, ages 3-4 (maximum class size: 12) and the Stars, ages 4-5 (maximum class size 16). AEIP employs qualified and experienced teachers and maintains an excellent student/teacher ratio under the guidance by the National Association of Education for Young Children (NAEYC). Space is limited so early enrollment is recommended.

The After School Care Program runs from 12:30 p.m. - 4 p.m., Monday through Thursday, and 12:30 p.m. - 2:30 p.m. on Friday. The program is supervised by an adult After School Program teacher. Activities include swimming, games, cooking, reading and learning fun.

The Mommy, Daddy and Me program is a two hour interactive program offered twice a week at AEIP. The program is led by a certified teacher who specializes in early childhood education.

15. Family Member Employment

The Bilateral Work Agreement between Israel and the United States allows spouses to obtain unrestricted work permits which allow the bearer to work for any employer in Israel. The work permit application process is initiated at post and takes 2-4 weeks to obtain and is issued for one year at a time and can be extended up to 63 months. Dependents interested in working on the local economy are encouraged to contact Devorie Friedman, GEI/SNAP Global Employment Advisor, at FriedmanDR@state.gov. The Global Employment Advisor provides an array of services, such as culturally appropriate resume preparation and interviewing techniques, briefings on cross-cultural issues, networking assistance, job listings, workshops, work permit applications, and one-on-one career counseling.

Although many positions in Israel require Hebrew fluency, Israel's large hi-tech industry offers numerous job opportunities, in positions such as IT, marketing, sales/customer service, technical writing, business consultancy, and more. There is a large demand for computer programmers and engineers, as many multinational corporations have established research centers in Israel, including Intel, HP, and IBM. There is also a demand for English teachers, particularly in international schools, such as the American International School, and private language institutes, such as Berlitz or The Wall Street Institute. Although lawyers and accountants will encounter steep competition in Israel, there are private firms and international organizations that seek professionals with US training. Salaries in Israel are generally lower than in the United States, particularly for entry-level positions. Local taxes will be deducted from the salary. All open positions within the Mission and through GEI/SNAP are advertised in the GEI/SNAP newsletter and on Embassy bulletin boards. There are a variety of EFM positions within the Embassy, including Consular Associate positions, HR Assistant, ESTH Assistant, IT Assistant and OMS rover positions.

16. Domestic employees

Domestic employees can be hired locally or from abroad. In either case a sponsor must fill out an undertaking and visa application, and provide national and work accident insurance, which can be

obtained from the Human Resources Office. The Israeli Ministry of Foreign Affairs approves all requests for domestic hire. If you are interested in bringing domestic help with you to Israel please contact Human Resources Assistant Avivit (Vivi) Martziel at MARTZIELAX@STATE.GOV.

17. Living in Israel

Many Israelis speak English but knowledge of Hebrew is an asset. The Embassy has some language classes and language programs are readily available for family members both through the Embassy and on the local market funds permitting. It is also possible to enroll in "Ulpan", intensive language programs on the local economy.

Dress in Israel is casual for most occasions. Formal attire is rarely used. Normal street-wear and sports jackets prove to be useful year round, reserving a suit and tie for the winter and special occasions. If you have high-schoolers, they too will need attire for the winter ball and prom, both sponsored by the American International School.

While Tel Aviv is a metropolitan post, security concerns restrict employees from using most forms of public transportation. Although transportation to/from work can usually be arranged, most employees find it useful to have at least one POV at post.

Please note: A second duty-free car/motorcycle may only be imported or purchased if the employee is accompanied to post by a dependent with a valid drivers license and that the dependant is not an Israeli citizen. I.e. Local MFA regulations state that a dependent holding dual US/Israeli citizenship that enters Israel as the dependent of a U.S. diplomat will be considered a local citizen and will not be afforded any diplomatic right. (Please see the separate Shipping cable for more information).

Summers are hot and humid in the coastal areas and very hot and dry in the desert. By contrast, the winters are quite chilly and damp. Snow falls in the northern regions and even in Jerusalem. December through March is the rainy season, during which time there will be considerable temperature variations between the highlands and the coastal areas. Jerusalem is considerably cooler than Tel Aviv throughout the year. You will need light winter clothing, and dressing in layers is the norm. Due to both its religious atmosphere and cooler climate, dress in Jerusalem tends to be more conservative than in Tel Aviv. Each season offers its own unique sporting activity; you can even snow ski at Mount Hermon on the Golan Heights. There is no shortage of activities in this country; it is all dependent upon your interests and budget.

While most consumer items are available in Israel, you may wish to include a supply of your "favorites" in your HHE. Israel produces many items, resulting in fewer imports and fewer American products on the shelves.

Please consider your holiday needs when packing your HHE. Christmas ornaments and decorations are difficult to obtain on the local market. Although the Foreign Ministry provides a cut tree to each household upon request, the selection is very limited, and artificial trees are not available locally. Decorations for other American holidays are similarly lacking.

It may seem there is a lot to absorb in coming to Tel Aviv, but we can assure you that post will respond to any questions you may have as soon as possible. E-mail is widely available at this post, and we strongly urge you to use it. Keep the CLO informed of any changes and provide us with any pertinent information so your arrival and settling-in will be as easy as possible.

Credit card services are readily available in Israel. MasterCard, Visa and American Express are widely accepted as well as the IsraCard, EuroCard, and Barclaycard.

We look forward to your arrival. We wish you a pleasant trip and a rewarding tour in Israel.

18. Preparing your OpenNet and Class Net computer account for migration.

For State Department employees, in order to have your existing OpenNet plus and classified ClassNet user accounts migrated to Tel Aviv, you will need to do the following:

Provide your current OpenNet plus and ClassNet systems administrators with the following information before you leave:

- a. Departure date
- b. Onward assignment
- c. Reporting date
- d. State Department email addresses (example: doejsx@state.govmailto:doejsx@state.gov and doejsx@state.sgov.gov)

Ask them to open tickets with the info center (INFOCENTER@STATE.GOV MAILTO:INFOCENTER@STATE.GOV) in order to coordinate your account moves. Once this is completed, notify your new supervisor or section that you will be arriving and request that they submit an OpenNet access request to the Tel Aviv ISC and a ClassNet CableExpress access request to the IPC.

19. Contact points

If you should have questions or are in need of further information, the following offices can assist you by email or at the following numbers:

Brent R. Bohne,
Management Counselor
972 (3)519-7313
E-mail: BOHNEBR@STATE.GOV

Elizabeth E. Moore,
Deputy Management Counselor
972 (3) 519-7316
E-mail: MOOREEE@STATE.GOV

Vincent Romero,
S/General Service Officer
972(3)519-7310
E-mail: ROMEROV3@STATE.GOV

Grant Ludwig, FS Health Practitioner (FSHP)
Health Unit
972(3)519-7323
E-mail: LUDWIGG@STATE.GOV

Daniel J. Power
Regional Security Officer
972(3)519-7400
E-mail: POWERDJ@STATE.GOV

Information Management Officer
William K. Curry
972-(3) 519-7575
E-mail: CURRYMK@STATE.GOV

Financial Management Officer
Lynn m. Ferenc
972-(3) 519-7516
E-mail: FERENCLM@STATE.GOV

Community Liaison Coordinator
Matthew K. Moore and Robert G. Posner
972(3)519-7389/7682
E-mail: CLOTELAVIV@STATE.GOV

Main Embassy fax no.
972(3)517-3227

CUNNINGHAM